

Dr. Larry Payne Discusses Yoga in Mid Life and Beyond

Dr. Larry Payne discusses importance of Yoga in Mid Life and Beyond. On the panel we have Dashama, Micheline Toussaint, Char Grossman and Marcela Clavijo.

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Full Transcript:

Priya Menon : Hello, everyone, and welcome to the Cure Panel Talk Show. I am Priya Menon, Scientific Media Editor at CureTalk blog on the Cure Panel Talk Show, joining you from India and I welcome all of you this evening to a discussion on yoga. Today is the third episode in our series of talks focusing on research and practice of yoga for addressing health and wellness. We previously had Dr. Satbir Khalsa of Harvard University who discussed the research being done in his lab using yoga as a therapy for different conditions and evaluating the benefits in clinical research studies. In the previous show, we hosted David Emerson from the Justice Research Institute who talked about his experience of using yoga to treat patients with trauma.

In today's show, we have a very distinguished expert joining us to talk about an important topic that applies to millions of Americans and even more worldwide. Joining him is our panel of four experienced and distinguished yoga teachers, and towards the end of the show we will be addressing questions received by our listeners. With that, I will hand over the talk to our co-host and resident yoga practitioner, Sharib Khan. Sharib, you are on air.

Sharib Khan : Thank you so much, Priya, and it's always an honor and it's always wonderful to meet up on the Cure Panel Talk Show and talk about something that's personal and so important in my life personally, having practiced yoga for the last eight years. So, today, we are very excited to continue the discussion in our yoga space as part of Cure Panel and we are going to... We have a very distinguished guest expert today, Dr. Larry Payne, who is an internationally respected yoga teacher and back specialist. The LA Times named Larry as one of America's most respected yoga teachers and he has co-authored several books including Yoga Therapy, Yoga for Dummies, and The Business of Teaching Yoga. Dr. Payne actually received his doctorate in fitness education with an emphasis in Hatha Yoga from Pacific Western University, and he wears several hats or should I say does a delicate balancing act between many professional roles.

He is the Founding President of International Association of Yoga Therapists, Founder of the Corporate Yoga Program at the J Paul Getty Museum. He is the Co-founder of the Yoga Club at UCLA School of Medicine for really bringing yoga into the medical environment and to hire a professional education environment and the Founding Director of the New Yoga Therapy Certification Program at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. He is also the first yoga teacher to offer yoga classes at the World Economic Forum, really bringing yoga to the forefront of the corporate masters of the, you know, world as they say in the Wall Street speak and this is personally very exciting for me additionally because he has also met some of the grand masters of yoga in the last 100 years, including Krishnamacharya, and we will definitely touch upon this later in the talk show.

So, Dr. Payne, very hearty welcome to the Cure Panel Talk Show and you will be joined by four other



distinguished and experienced yoga teachers on our panel today and discussing a very important topic that I think really applies, as Priya mentioned, to millions of people in America but also worldwide and as yoga is becoming more popular, one may misleadingly assume that its actually for people who are fit and young, you know, given all the glossy portrayal in the media publications showcasing young practitioners holding breathtaking poses in even more spectacular locations, you know, one in 50s and 60s and beyond can assume that yoga is something out of their grasp. Well, we do know that age is no barrier and ample proof of that was demonstrated by Diana Nyad who finally crossed the Florida Strait at the age 64 after full failed attempt just a few days ago. So, we are going to talk to Dr. Payne about how yoga is not only doable by people in their 50s and beyond but might actually keep them healthy and have greater vitality and provide therapeutic value for several conditions as they progress in their journey. So, with that, Dr. Payne, let's begin our conversation today and I wanted to start the talk with actually talking about your own personal experience of how you started yoga with your own problems with back pain and chronic stress in 1979?

Dr. Larry Payne : Well, first of all, Sir, thank you so much for that great buildup. (Laughter) That makes me feel like I must be old right now. (Laughter)

Sharib Khan : Oh, that certainly wasn't the intention, but, you know, we have to do justice to this.

Dr. Larry Payne : Thank you and also to all the other people on the panel and some of them are my friends, Dashama is a friend, and so my introduction was with lower back pain and at the time, in another lifetime, I was the West Coast Manager of Advertising Sales for my college magazine, which was a big magazine, and I can remember the pressure of that job and I went to a lot of places to fix my back pain, nobody could do it and then somebody dragged me to yoga. I have never forgiven him and fortunately, the woman was very compassionate. She was older and, you know, wasn't pushy or anything like that and at the end of the class, the back pain I had for almost two years like a dog bite in my back was gone and it lasted for about four or five hours, so I knew I was on to something and that's how it started.

Sharib Khan : Uhhmm. Great. So, talking about, you know, yoga for the older people, older, elderly, what do you think currently are the misperceptions that people in this demographic age group have about yoga and the barriers to their active participation?

Dr. Larry Payne : Well, as I understand it from being in India several times from the Indian standpoint, from Krishnamacharya's standpoint, who I have been fortunate as you mentioned to meet him, there are three stages of life or yoga – Shikhsana which I call young and restless (laughter), Rakshana which I call the prime of life, and Chikitsa which is more like when you have a problem; and in India, their lifestyle is much different. People _____ much younger and so forth and in America now, this rakshana stage has become much broader, much broader. So, the thing is now people don't like to be referred to as seniors, so its not just the baby boomers that you... Look at the life of a professional athlete. Somewhere at the end of their 30s and certainly by 40s, they are out of the game. They can't compete like they used to. So, they have to change what they do, how they do and its the same with yoga. I mean, people at a certain stage don't want to jump all the time, you know. The people that spread yoga the most in America – BKS Iyengar, _____ – they were 16 years old when they learned yoga, 16! So, that same teacher, Krishnamacharya, later in life, he was always teaching new things and he got his first western male student somewhere in the late 60s, early 70s. He was the ambassador to India, Dr. Albert Franklin, and then Krishnamacharya started to teach differently. (Uhhmm..) This is what I call the contemporary teachings of Krishnamacharya and they were emphasized by his son, TKV Desikachar, and that is the stage that I am going for. Somewhere between 40 something and 70 something is the largest segment of our population and again its not just the boomers. These are people who are doing things. They want to be active and this is the prime of their life. So, that's the largest segment of our population. In my opinion, they are the most under served and especially men because men do not like to look bad in front of women. (Laughter) If you look at the yoga classes and they are packed with women, there are few guys, and so now with Prime of Life Yoga they have the opportunity to feel like its user friendly and they are not going to get injured and so they have become very popular.

Sharib Khan : So, that's an interesting, very interesting point that you are making over there about the age



group from 47 to 77 and men largely being under served and under, you know, with lesser outreach and of course there are several reasons and barriers and this is exemplified by the questions that we have received from some of our listeners, you know. A lot of these questions are how long can one continue to practice yoga? Is it safe after the age of 60 or 65? I am 55 years old, how can I begin practicing yoga? So, in a very nutshell, of course, do you advocate practice of this? What is your... What would you like to tell somebody who is in this age group come to you and say how if they want to practice yoga or if they want to get going, what would your response be and how would you motivate and inform them to actually get started on this path, at this stage of their life?

Dr. Larry Payne : Well, you know, there's always politics in names, but the original name that Krishnamacharya and Desikachar gave this segment is called, the type of practice is called Viniyoga. So, that means that the yoga is adapted to the individual based on their age, their profession, their psychological, and all that stuff. But, what's happened in America is that particular flavor or style really appealed to the midlife and so some of the teachers of Desikachar, like myself have, you know, made our own synonym and, you know, mine is called Prime of Life and my website is samata.com and I have... There's lots of videos and things that people can get started with. I highly encourage people, especially the middle-aged people like guys and women, 50, 60. You can't believe the benefits you are going to get and you don't have to do the hard yoga part to get the benefit.

Sharib Khan : Guess we might be having difficulties in Dr. Payne's line.

Dr. Larry Payne : Yes, I have been hearing you. I can hear you.

Sharib Khan : Yeah, yeah. I think we just lost you for a few moments. Yeah.

Dr. Larry Payne : Okay. Did you get the part about how...

Sharib Khan : You were talking about the website and it has all the videos, yeah...

Dr. Larry Payne : Yeah and samata.com but there is definitely a time, a style, a way of doing yoga for people in their 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s and then after that, you know, the new name in America is, we don't use seniors so much anymore, we use older adults (laughter) and that's what the people like in these assisted living and then really start doing like chair yoga. So, in the book, Yoga for Dummies, all those stages are covered – Young and restless, prime of life, older adults and there were some samples for the people to do.

Sharib Khan : Absolutely. I mean, you know, I actually grew up in India and, you know, if you look at the vedic lifestyle descriptions that we grew up learning about, it was your various stages of life. First 25 years of life, 25 to 50 years of life, then 50 to 75, and (yeah) 75 to 100 years. So, you know, it obviously makes sense that yoga would evolve as you age and with your body and there was an article in the New York Times recently where many experts including Dr. Loren Fishman and an Iyengar teacher, Gary Kraftsow, was quoted saying that the body changes, so you have to obviously transform your practice along with the needs of the body.

So, just to, you know, very high level... Take a case. Let's say somebody who has had osteoporosis and you know, at 65, male, and what are some of the high-level things that you might consider in personal life and the practice this person at that point of age, like in terms of frequency of practice, number of poses, not to do or to do, so can you give us some idea about that? Yeah.

Dr. Larry Payne : Yeah. I think later in life if people haven't been doing yoga, if they are new to yoga at 50, 60, 70, the points where people often get hurt is in the inverted postures. So, now there are lots of ways of supporting with box and wedges and things, feet up on the wall and like cat they get the benefits, but I think they have to be careful if they..., you know, there are certain styles of yoga. When you walk in the room and they will put you on the head stand on the first day, if you are 60 or 70 years old because they have a cookie cutter course, one size fits all and that doesn't do good for these older people. So, you have to make sure



you are in a class where you are not pushed into the thing. So, in this stage of life, there's more of a focus on the breath. There's more importance on function, more than perfect form. So, in other words, we suggest that the people have forgiving limbs, that is soft on their arms and legs because it's the spine that we are trying to focus on. And also, we find that for that stage, that moving in and out postures before you hold them is beneficial for their joints in a lot of ways. And then, you know, the sequence is important and all the young teachers on the panel are very fit as if they know that, you know, what must people do after this or that. And then, especially in this segment, you want, you know, the more user-friendly postures. Now, in that age bracket, osteoporosis, the standing postures usually you do pretty good because, you know, you want to put some stress on the bones and it's both osteoporosis and also what is called osteopenia, where you are almost there, and so they find in weightlifting, standing yoga postures, also the standing postures are more forgiving. There's more music and move around and adjust and so forth. So, that is my off-the-topic thoughts.

Sharib Khan : So, again getting to a little bit about back pain and of course with old age and older adults because of the aches in the body and also because of other conditions, back pain is a chronic and a common problem and you have also dealt with it. And, there are a lot of people like Loren Fishman who actually specialized in using yoga as a treatment for back pain. Can you throw a little bit of light on what we know about treating back pain through yoga and some of it through practice and some of it through scientific studies that show whether it works or it doesn't work and what kind of people it works in, so can you discuss a little bit about back pain?

Dr. Larry Payne : Sure. Gary Kraftsow who was also a student of Desikachar and his staff who were physical therapists have, you know, done one or two studies that were printed in the Annals of Medicine on lower back _____. Iyengar just had another one recently. Here's what we know about our lifestyle in America. We bend over too much, so if you look at the life of the average person, you get up in the morning, you sit on the edge of the bed, you bend forward. You go into the bathroom, you take care of some type of visit and you sit and bend forward. You get ready to go out to work, you lean over the sink, you bend forward. When you get to work, there is a computer at your desk and you bend forward and when you get home at night, you answer your personal email, so your eyes get blurry and you bend forward. (Laughter) We bend forward too much. So, what most people have with the back problem is what I would call flexion faults. Lumbar strain, disk sciatica, all those things, that is a lot of different kinds of back problems and there are some people who have the opposite, but the majority of the people that I see, I would say 80% to 90%, have something to do with bending forward too much. So, the kind of postures that we try to do is to even out, to get some type of extension in there, and also by the time someone reaches 50, 60, 70, even 30 or 40, he has been right handed or left handed for a long time. So, you need to do some asymmetrical-type postures, repeat each side of the body separately. So, all of the eastern traditions, yoga, Tai Chi, _____, even Pilates, they address that. So, that's something that is important to work inside the body separately and in the majority of cases do something to help people with more arching if they can do it and to have the knowledge to know what conditions that you can't do that with. For instance, there's something called spondylolisthesis, where the vertebra has slipped forward and they can't bend backward. But, most people, need to find some ways to arch, either in the standing poses or the classic posture known as the cobra and things like that. That's not my overall opinion.

Sharib Khan : Thank you and I will actually bring in some of our panelists to weight on this, including Marcela and from an Iyengar perspective how to address some of these problems that might happen from bending forward.

Dr. Larry Payne : Oh, very good. I have met BKS Iyengar and I studied that system for almost seven years, so it's a great...

Sharib Khan : Yeah, actually I do want to discuss your meeting with Krishnamacharya and I have read on your Huffington Post blog that it was a very intimidating presence and I will get back to this before... I want to bring on the panelists one by one, but before that I do want to ask a little bit about, ask you to throw a little bit more light on what is Prime of Life Yoga and what are the principles and what do you teach in that and what



age group does it really apply to?

Dr. Larry Payne : The Prime of Life Yoga is primarily for people 40 something to 70 something. Now, in Los Angeles, there are lots of athletes. So, there are still people, 41, 42, 43, you could do a lot of things, but by about 45 the body really has changed. So, the postures are narrowed down to more user-friendly postures. There is more of a focus on the spine, which I have mentioned before. The postures move in and out and all the sequences and routines are very user friendly and so it attracts men because they can do the pose. The difference between the Iyengar system, which again is a very good system, is we don't use as many props. (Uhhmm..) So, I think because we have chosen simpler postures, its not as necessary and but, you know, you can say the wall is a prop, the floor is a prop, they can certainly use bolsters, straps, and things like that, but not as many, and also I think we draw more men in other styles, sometimes you know almost equal number.

Sharib Khan : We did lose you for a bit, but I think we can make the connection. We just lost you for a few seconds, but as you were saying and BKS Iyengar has mentioned very clearly in his book, Light on Yoga, is that the wall is a great teacher. It is a great prop. I didn't know so much about it, just using the wall. That is wonderful. Thank you so much for a wonderful introduction and what I am going to do...

Dr. Larry Payne : You are welcome.

Sharib Khan : ...is switch gears a little bit and bring on our panelists one by one. So, I'll bring on Marcela who is a certified junior Intermediate 1 Iyengar yoga teacher and is also in the core faculty of the Iyengar Yoga Institute of New York. Her yoga training includes various trips to India where she has studied with the Iyengar family and she has also trained with Patricia Walden and Manuoso Manos. Marcela is an ordained Tibetan Buddhist nun in the higher tradition. She has completed various retreats here in the west and also abroad. She leads yoga and meditation retreats, yeah, and which I actually went to a few weeks back in Menla Mountain, upstate New York. So, Marcela, a pleasure to have you on our show and would love to have your thoughts on this topic and also discuss yoga for older-aged people with Larry and ask your questions.

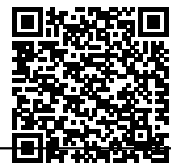
Dr. Larry Payne : Middle aged, middle, middle aged. (Laughter)

Marcela : Middle aged. Yes. Thanks so much. Hello, Larry! How are you? Namaste!

Marcela: So nice to meet you. I wanted to thank you all for inviting me on the show. Its a real pleasure and its real honor to have the opportunity to share with different practitioners and speak about these topics that are so relevant, so important in so meaningful in everybody's life nowadays and I wanted to add a little bit to what we were just talking, what I was listening to, about these forward bending syndrome that Dr. Payne described, how most of our activities involved forward bending, sciatic condition and one of the ways we addressed it, I think all yoga practices addressed it, at least in the Iyengar _____ we start out with standing postures and standing asymmetrical postures for the reason that Dr. Payne was mentioning where the asymmetrical postures stretch and move and fall on one side of the body at a time and its a wonderful antidote for the asymmetrical sitting that so many of us spend so much of our lives in and also in our _____ even though we do use props, what we are taught as teachers from the beginning student is actually to use as little props as possible so that the student learns to feel that that prop is their own body, (uhhmm...) that they have everything they need for proper support, proper balance, and proper movement already built in and then the posture introduced is the way to help some to get the maximum benefit of however far they can stretch or move or bend. And, I also wanted to say, Dr. Payne, I have taken so much samba classes and it has been so nice to end a class and not have to clean up any props afterwards. (Laughter).

Sharib Khan : Marcela, we just lost you for a little bit, looks like we are having a difficulty.....in the phone line.

Marcela : Okay. I guess my...



Sharib Khan : We can hear you now. I can hear you. That's really cute.

Marcela : Sir, can I get my question now or should I wait for later? You tell me.

Sharib Khan : No, no. Please go ahead. Please go ahead.

Marcela : Okay. Dr. Payne, I wanted to tell you that I think your work address is a much needed combination of yoga and modern medicine. And I love the work that you are doing with the frequent _____ in your program with the university. We are so lucky now _____ even possible to _____ an illness and come up with a yoga posture or a yoga sequence that can help us. The ancient kind of word for what yoga practice is aimed at, which is the word Chitta. Its a word for which there is no English equivalent and perhaps the closest that we have in English is the phrase, I would think its mind and heart, which...

Dr. Larry Payne : Yes. Very good.

Marcela : ...refers to a person's mental and emotional experience and the purpose of yoga, as I feel, is to cultivate that mental and emotional health and well being and when we practice yoga, the physical benefits are wonderful side effects and to me its a testament to the depths of yoga that we can practice it for its side effects and still have such great results.

Dr. Larry Payne : Yes. Totally agree here.

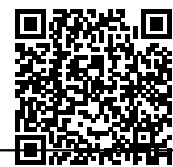
Marcela : And I agree with you wholeheartedly that yoga offers benefits, no matter what postures we practice or the state of difficulty that we practice them in and I agree that functional movement is very important and that breath and prana are vital to the way that we should learn asana and that yoga gives Prime of Life people wonderful physical benefit, but no one needs to miss out on the ultimate promise of yoga as I like to call it, no matter what their age and it seems to me, Dr. Payne, that with the yoga we have something very wonderful and very unique to offer people in prime of life as they live longer and healthier lives. I think we could do great benefit by helping them also to cultivate mental and emotional well being at this time in their life so that they can face illnesses and aging and to me, this time of a person's life marks a period of growth and sometimes midlife becomes a time of challenge, crisis, confusion, and perhaps even depression. I have students and I see sick and healthy students in prime of life, who are also afraid and confused and anxious about some of these issues and I would like to help some, so I would welcome any input or appreciate hearing how you address these in your work.

Dr. Larry Payne : Well, first of all, as I looked into your _____ and by the way you got the royal family of teachers.

Marcela : Oh, yes.

Dr. Larry Payne : They are all those people..wonderful and dear friends of mine. Yeah. Manuoso, Patricia... So, I think that, you know, a lot of what you said is very true, but as far as the people having these problems, so one of the things we also have to remember as teachers is Krishnamacharya said that the most important aspect of healing is the relationship between the teacher and the student. And so that is the package. You shared their life for them, that they trust you and they can talk to you. Especially when we work with people one on one, that just being a good listener and also meeting them where they are so that they can feel okay about the fact that they can't do this, they can't do that. They can just breathe, you know, you can give them a practice. I try to make people feel okay about where they are just like you do and if they have issues, fine, but I think that link with you is one of the key things that we have to keep remembering, so we have to always be an example, you know, of the good aspects of yoga and I think that these things you mentioned, they will find, you know, help from just the relationship with you as their teacher. That's my opinion.

Marcela : Thank you....very much.



Dr. Larry Payne : You are welcome.

Sharib Khan : I apologize that there is technical difficulty in the lines today and everybody breaking up a little bit, but I believe for the most part of it you are able to make sense of what's being spoken, but I want to add a little bit here, Dr. Payne and Marcela, thank you for that insight, Marcela, and last time when we had David Emerson talk about using yoga to treat people in trauma, one of the things he mentioned which I again here echoed and what Marcela was saying and what you said is that the relationship between the teacher and the student and how sometimes teachers just have to listen or wait for the person to have the ability to think and plan and do the pose rather than necessarily have them just do the pose because they have been told to do a pose and it was a really interesting insight that David mentioned in the last call was that just letting the patient will it inside themselves to actually come into that pose and that is a huge barrier that they have overcome, especially when they have faced trauma. So...

Dr. Larry Payne : I would like to do one more comment, just one other aspect that's come up. There is also the internet, there's this danger that, you know, people are going to go to the internet, they are going to see something and do it and they may not choose, you know, the person who has the knowledge and because there's a lot of stuff on the internet, so the best thing is, you know, if they can align themselves with a good school like the Iyengar School or like Viniyoga School or whatever, to make sure that's where they are getting their information, I think it's the.. also that we as yoga teachers, you know, we have boundaries, especially in the United States where people sue people. You know, it's a ridiculous society (yeah) and it's not so much in India.

Sharib Khan : Yeah, yeah, absolutely.

Dr. Larry Payne : So, you know it helps us to work with other health professionals ideally to stay out of trouble.

Sharib Khan : So, now with that, I will introduce our next panelist, Micheline, who is an oncology counselor at Life with Cancer. In addition to being a licensed clinical social worker, she is a registered yoga teacher and a certified end-of-life counselor at Life with Cancer. She provides individuals, couples, and families counseling for cancer patients and their loved ones. She helped develop a six-week mind-body education series, leads yoga and meditation classes for patients and caregivers, facilitates support groups, and speaks to community groups about issues related to cancer. She has a particular interest in using mind-body practices to strengthen resiliency in cancer patients and their caregivers. Micheline, you are on air and please go ahead and discuss the topic and ask your questions with Dr. Payne.

Micheline : Thank you. It's just really delightful to be here. I feel like so much of what has already been said, I am just resonating with and really enjoying this conversation. I do work primarily in a healthcare setting and Dr. Payne, when you were talking about legality and lawsuits, I am very familiar with the.....none of these patients are doing anything wrong there. We are very happy in healthcare setting. I think one of my primary sort of question that I wanted to throw out there is not so much about the physicality. I am getting a lot from what you are saying, but I have a question that I always struggle with around sort of conceptualizing sort of ego stuff, how we move through these different stages, wrestling with our ego. When I am teaching classes to cancer patients, but I think it's a fight for everyone for prime of life and beyond. The messages they are getting constantly are you have to fight that disease. You have to fight with your back to what you had and, you know, this is what I think those of us in prime of life and beyond are constantly hearing. You want to fight to get something back and, you know, I am trying to work with modeling and creating scenarios where there is acceptance for the current moment, the current situation. There is acceptance of what is, but I find sometimes there's sort of a struggle between that acceptance and hope for change. You know...

Dr. Larry Payne : I think what she said is very beautiful and very astute and that it's really true. We have to take this with acceptance. You know, this thing about fighting all the time and so forth, we have to take it, you



know, one day at a time and acceptance is a big thing. I totally agree with you.

Sharib Khan : I will actually jump in and I will have....Marcela actually add something here because, you know, the whole language for the fight against cancer where, as I mentioned, I was in retreat where Marcela was there and there were other people who were talking about trauma of everyday life. Mark Epstein has written a book on this and how we need to learn and using Buddhist preachings and practices that trauma is part of everyday life and how do we accept that? How do we accept that suffering and go beyond that? So, Marcela, would you like to add a little bit on that point, especially from what we learned at the retreat just a few weeks back?

Marcela : Oh, yes, of course. Thank you so much, Sharib. I feel like Micheline and I are asking a similar question worded a little differently because when I was thinking about how to word my question, that word actually kept coming back to me that our society, our doctors, they are clearly telling us that we have to fight disease and its very... it can be very tricky to tell somebody who is sick to accept their illness (yeah) without giving the message that well, this is as good as its going to get, so I am sorry, I can't do anything more for you. You just have to be more like resign yourself to your fate rather than fine, creative and positive and constructive way of being with what's happening in your body and your life and midlife brings up a life, brings up menopause, it brings up, you know, empty nest syndrome. It brings out, you know, a red convertible. All these transitions that are possible growth time but also can become a crisis for a person because they are starting to look at the rest of their life and at their mortality.

Dr. Larry Payne : So, what we were talking about at the retreat was using the meditation technique of what Micheline was saying about being in the present moment and using that acceptance as the way to actually go on in a creative manner. Acceptance I think doesn't mean that there is nothing you can do about things. It means that when we stop fighting something, even on a cellular level, our body, our mind can enter towards creative energy, creative ways of thinking and working through things rather than, you know, what you were saying, Micheline, trying to fight it and with the meditation a lot of it is really learning to be in the present like she was saying and the breath is one of the best ways to be in the present moment. So, the experience of body is all from the present moment. The experience of our mind is not always present, its either flashing back into the past or being in the world of the future so that be the experience of fantasy, so when Dr. Payne said grasp and function and concentration, that really resonated with me and its being in the present moment, but exploring the idea of accepting and also what Dr. Emerson said, which was that we can let people move in and out of the pose in the way that we choose, what Sharib is saying, to invite them, not to give them the order or to make them feel like they are being told what to do, but to teach them to be listeners of their own experience, something like that. I think awareness has a lot to do with it. Yeah.

Sharib Khan : Uhhmm... So, thank you for that really, really interesting insights, folks. This was very interesting, Micheline, for bringing this point up and if you have other questions, you know, please feel free to ask and then we can bring on our other experts as well.

Micheline : I would like hearing from other people as well. This is Micheline. Thank you. That was very helpful, Marcela.

Dr. Larry Payne : Thank you. Sure. Let's hear from somebody else.

Sharib Khan : Yeah. So, I will bring on Char Grossman and Char has been very supportive of the Cure Panel Talk Show. Dr. Payne, we do hear you and I am bringing on a third panelist, Char Grossman, here and I see the professional...

Dr. Larry Payne : Hi, Char!

Char : Hi Larry!

Dr. Larry Payne : Where are you from? (Laughter) Where are you from?



Char : I am from Cleveland, Ohio, a good friend of Ann Taylor's [00:39:33] _____ said to give you a hug.

Dr. Larry Payne : Oh, my god! Completely out of breath. That's a really good thing.

Those are my dear friends. I know. I know.

Char : That's actually interesting side way. Dr. Payne, where are you calling in from? It will be interesting to just see where people are calling in from because we have always had very...

Dr. Larry Payne : Los Angeles, California. Los Angeles, California, in actually area called Marina del Rey.

Char : Oh! That's a nice area. So, we are calling from all different parts.

Dr. Larry Payne : Yeah. Marcela is calling in from New York, I believe, and Micheline, I don't know where you are calling in from, but yeah, definitely...

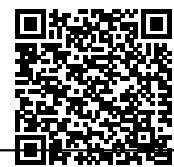
Micheline : I am just outside Washington DC.

Dr. Larry Payne : I think Dashama is also in Los Angeles when she comes up.

Sharib Khan : Yeah, we haven't yet seen her on the call yet, but I believe she will dial in at some point. So, Char, you know, she is a professionally recognized therapeutic yoga specialist and educational intervention teacher and also a psychologist. She has done her yoga training at Yoga Alliance and has obtained professional training at Duke Integrative Medicine and Yoga Awareness for Cancer and completed MD Anderson Integrative Medicine Program's Oncology Training Conference. She founded YogaReach and she is very interested in bringing yoga as a therapy to individuals of all ages and abilities. So, Char, you are on air for your questions and discussion.

Char : Thank you. Thank you, again, and hello to all of you. Hello. Larry, one of the things that is from my background of when I founded YogaReach which is the program that utilizes all types of physical, mental, social competencies, anything that has to do with people that have special needs and medical challenges. So, those are the types of people that I work individually and group wise with, but these types of people are really no different than we are. So, when they started with me they were at a younger age and now like the rest of us, they sort of reached middle age, midlife, and with that their bodies have changed. Even if they started off with the movement problems to begin with, now they have an even more sensitive situation. So, you know, at this point, they are not as flexible as they were. They may not have balance technique, the strength isn't there. You know, I keep trying to get them to come up with different ways that honestly with the acceptance that they can believe in themselves, that they can do anything that, you know, no matter what type of disability we have, when you have, rotate your fingers just a little bit or when you get energy through your body, you know, it helps you mentally to just know that, wow, I can do things. I can _____ myself. Again, like Marcela and Micheline talked about that, you know, things do occur on an everyday basis and let's live in the present, I agree with that wholeheartedly, but I want to know if you had some suggestions as far as the different types of strategies that might be really beneficial for the type of population that does have medical challenges, be it like stroke survivors, Parkinson's, people with special needs, you know, and other those types of disabilities.

Dr. Larry Payne : Well, you know there's a lot of people and, you know, to say something broad and general I would say the key thing is to let go of perfect form and to focus more on function. You know, what is the function that's doing this, you know, because in our early stages we learned yoga that had very good form, which was good at that stage because that's what they want people to do _____ you know, you are _____ Olympic athlete or something, but at this stage, you know, the body is fully set, so if you try to ask people to do things that require perfect form, then you can get in trouble. So, more like about function. I think its also incredible that you and couple other people on the panel have a professional license as well. This is uplifting the status of yoga. This is what we try to do_____ all the teachers are, you know, they have the



license of profession, then the more we can make a bond and link it with integrative medicine, especially for these bonds that we share, I think that it's great for the teacher of yoga.

Char : Thank you.

Dr. Larry Payne : You are welcome.

Char : Its very interesting, these points like not just focus and form, which is what normally we would associate, you know, looking at all these glossy publications as I said. This is the perfect stage that we want to achieve, but forgetting in that process that the process is, as you said, the experience of the journey is as good as, is better than reaching the destination, so, you know, putting it in that context, but I also wanted to add something that I have personally been reflecting on and its coming from some of Sufi and Islamic teachings that I have been hearing about and thinking about and that is even before function, the fact that you can create an intent and have an intent or very explicitly stated intent in your mind that we are doing something and you are doing this as per Sufi and Islamic practices, doing this for the divine and for the, you know, the presence of the divine or in the presence of the divine or to express gratitude for the divine energy that is all around us. That in itself can be a solid preparation for us to do the function to finally get into the form and as I hear everybody talk about it, I just think that bringing that element out in the practice and somehow communicating that intent, function, experience, all lead to that form, is part of the yoga process, would be a very interesting way to address the practice and I would like to...

Dr. Larry Payne : You know, its a good thing, its a good comment. The challenge we have is the people that feel like that that might be religious or something _____ and certainly has a great value, but what we find with the lay public is even something like chanting or any of those things like that, often there are people who have resistance to things like that, so we started saying like connecting with the divine and all this. I mean its perfect for the people who are with yoga and Yoga Sutra, but when these people come from the outside, when they have problems, they have never been in yoga, they just come for yoga as a therapy or something like that, you see it as an issue [00:46:18] _____ and I think its a beautiful point.

Char : Yeah.

It's a beautiful point.

Sharib Khan : Yeah. So, we finally have Dashama in the call and as...

Dr. Larry Payne : Hi, Dashama!

Sharib Khan : She always manages to make it.

Dashama : Hi!

Sharib Khan : Dashma, can you... Yeah, we can hear you. So good to have you back on the show. I know you have always had trouble dialing in. Last time your phone got dropped in the ocean (laughter) in Bali, but you still made it, so we really appreciate that and a big hi from everyone.

Dashama : Hi, everyone! I... Yeah, I was actually in a conference and so I just got in and I am here.

Sharib Khan : So, we actually... Yeah, wanted to introduce you quickly and have you discuss your question with Dr. Payne. So, Dashama is..., doctor, you know her well, but for the listeners, I would like to just quickly summarize that she is a yoga and fitness expert with 10+ years in the industry, training, coaching, and consulting clients and companies. She is definitely the creative dynamo, doing multimedia productions and videos, books, DVDs, which have been featured on oprah.com, Walmart, Barnes&Noble, Target, and a wide following of more than 8 million views on YouTube. So, Dashama, please go ahead and thank you so much for being here.



Dr. Larry Payne : Let me just throw one another thing. She is a hell of a dancer too. (laughter)

Sharib Khan : Oh, that...

Dashama : Thank you, doctor.

Dr. Larry Payne : You are welcome.

Dashama : Yeah. I had such a privilege to be present with Dr. Larry Payne in California during one of his book launches actually and I am just honored to know you and the question that I was thinking about having to do with addiction actually because I have a lot of people in my life come and I think that yoga can be so powerful for healing and overcoming addictions and I just love to hear your feedback, if you have any experience in that with yoga and I know that yoga and meditation and mindset and replacing negative habit patterns with positive yoga and healthy patterns is really a good way to go, but if you have anything that you can contribute as far as solutions and technique, anything in that regard would be a big blessing, I felt.

Dr. Larry Payne : Well, do you know we have the Yoga Therapy Rx course at Loyola Marymount? We have a teacher, Robert Birnberg, who was once an addict and then he is now a, you know, recovering drug person and he also became an expert in the Yoga Sutras, so he has a lot of great information relating to Yoga Sutra of Patanjali from yoga, this is a 12-step program and so I think its helpful and lengthy. Actually, I have been on many of his conferences where you know there are certain stages of addition where people just don't want to do yoga. I mean you can't push them or force them, you know. Its like they are in this particular stage but when why they are ready, we also find that being in nature is very helpful and you do that a lot. You take people _____ here and there. Another person who has started a program, that's an outpatient program in Los Angeles that has a way to help with the immune system because this is way down_____ The International Sports Medicine Institute and I think because they are in Los Angeles, I am happy to introduce you to them. You have got quite a program while there with several MDs and this is like an outpatient type of _____ yoga teachers and so forth. So, what I have learned about is there are certain stages of addiction where, you know, the yoga has to be at the right time, otherwise, you know, they have a hard time doing almost anything. You know, they are scared of time and they are having a hard time with that and you will be a perfect person to motivate people when they are ready for yoga practice, but I will just say that depending on what stage they are in and also their age and all the things, I think that they have got to get their chemistry, you know, better, you know, and their immune system better so that if you want me to put my two cents in, you know, that is a great way to support what you are doing and I would like to connect you to Dr. Perry in Los Angeles.

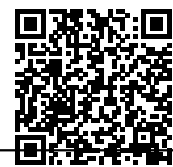
Dashama : Thank you.

Dr. Larry Payne : I think you guys would work out well together.

Dashama : Yeah, that will be wonderful. I really appreciate it. Thank you for your...

Sharib Khan : So, we just have a little bit of time left and I do want to bring in a few of the questions that the listeners have submitted. They are all sort of falling under couple of categories. One is, people want to know what yoga poses to do with certain conditions and I think we have mentioned a little bit about osteoporosis, but Dr. Payne, is there anything that is specifically recommended or prescribed or to be avoided for people who have glaucoma and should they be doing yoga postures like head stands, inversions? Have you had some experience and can throw some light on this because I think this is a question that I haven't seen this come before. So, I thought it will be interesting to bring it up.

Dr. Larry Payne : This one also falls in the category of something called retinopathy. So, there's something in the eye like an eye disease, glaucoma, high blood pressure, and all those things and definitely inversions are not recommended. There are even some stages of diabetes where the organs start to degenerate, you know, advanced diabetes, where you have to be careful of that as well, but I want to go back to, you know,



the magazines like to say... The magazines like to say what pose do you do for this and, you know, I know all the teachers on the staff understand it. There is no one pose that is going to fix somebody with something. You know it depends on the person and its usually the fact that they are doing a practice that's going to help their whole system. Its not like we say this is the pose you do to fix this or fix that. Its usually a practice that fits that person and of course, certain poses we know, but I think its better to know what not to do. Just like you said, that was brilliant. What do you avoid and you know, that is definitely what you mentioned, that particular problem is you have to be careful_____ to show you.

Sharib Khan : Yes, absolutely. Marcela, Micheline, or Dashama, any of you have dealt with patients with glaucoma, retinopathies, and would like to throw some light on this?

Dashama : Well...I was just to say, I think anybody who has that especially should avoid inversion, but there are things that I have heard about people taking that helps you leave some of that glaucoma especially, nutritionally, and as you said maybe you alleviate that actual issue. I think people overcome the entire disease and then potentially they can re-approach doing things like inversions eventually. So, I think addressing the problem and then I think people actually do yoga and then go on to being able to do things that are like inversions without a problem.

Sharib Khan : Uhhmm.. Okay. I will move to the next class and then again in this we have five to six questions and I think, Dr. Payne and Marcela, we might be able to summarize. For people with age-related joint issues, osteoporosis, arthritis, what are some of the three things, let's say three things, to be very mindful of when practicing in terms of making sure your balancing is right, you are not putting too much pressure on your bones which are already becoming a little brittle? So, Dr. Payne, what are the three things in your experience that you recommend to patients with age-related chronic joint diseases, arthritis, osteoporosis?

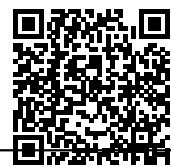
Dr. Larry Payne : Well, again I would say to avoid the real difficult postures, you know, the ones where you are really twisting yourself into a pretzel that, you know, you don't need to do those postures. Also, I will just come back to the standing postures, the way, you know, you have to do the weightbearing on the joints and so I think I would say that I always come back to those and I think that it does not hurt to link up with the medical or the alternative health community for supplements or medicine. You know, I am not against taking medicines. There are certain things that complement as well and its just knowing, you know, the right doctors, you know the ones who have the medical training and they are also open to more like holistic ideas and not taking lot of medicines, things like that, but I think that would be the third element I would recommend is some type of supplemental medication.

Sharib Khan : Uhhmm... Marcela, any insights into that? Have you worked with patients with any of these issues?

Marcela : Yes, yes, Sharib, yes. I also wanted to make comments about the glaucoma question because I have worked with someone, in fact, at the institution. Its a young woman and she goes for test, I think, twice a year and a few years after working with her, the tests that were done on her, I am not a specialist, but she tried to describe it to me and its something that measures how much pressure is felt in the eye and she told me that after doing yoga for a couple of years that had gone down a lot and...

Dr. Larry Payne : Beautiful.

Marcela : Yeah, this was the main thing and we had a specialist come in to our school who is teaching us teachers how to work therapeutically with students and I remember one of the things that we were taught is to teach the students to be very sensitive to how much pressure they feel in their eyes, in the back of their eyes, in their temple, and in their brain, not only during inversions but at any other postures, the triangle pose, where the head is taken off to the sides and all kinds of adjustments can be made where the head is supported so that she can stretch her spine and not have any weight there and she can do some inversions. What we do sometimes is we wrap her head with a band and that seems to diminish the pressure in her



eyes, but it really is...

Dr. Larry Payne : For headaches as well, yeah.

Marcela : ...week to week, month by month situation. I just wanted to say that about three things that I would tell people. I would think one thing was what Dr. Payne said, is let go of the way the poses look in the book and work on understanding how your body functions and how the _____ bring up proper functional movement. That would be one thing. I would say also feel your skin, feel your eyes. It will be a practice, the way that you do it, it will make you hot, this will dry out your eyes, this will make you sweaty and that's also a good indicator of how the practice is going and also find a teacher that you can talk to and that you can listen to and that you feel like what Dr. Payne, when you told me in fact, if there is good communication between you and your teacher, then you will feel comfortable about talking to them. You won't feel self-conscious or limited in any way about exploring what works for you with your issues in your practice with your teacher.

Sharib Khan : So, we are in the last couple of minutes and I want to address quickly two short questions, rapid fire, and then I want to end the call with asking Dr. Payne something about his experience with Krishnamacharya. So, Micheline and Char, you might be able to answer this. Have you ever worked with a patient who has multiple myeloma, a blood cancer that can affect spinal vertebrae and fracture them. Are there any kind of yoga poses or any other therapy sequences you have worked with, any patients in that phase?

Micheline : I haven't worked with any patients specifically diagnosed with that, but what I think, what I simply do as far as looking at a patient _____ etc., is they have to individualize _____ talked about, but it really helps to show them the pose, that to show them the pose maybe in the chair, maybe against the wall, maybe lying on the floor, maybe standing up. So, I first take it from that angle and then whatever is possible, whatever the person can do, that I think is, you know, that will be extremely beneficial to them.

Sharib Khan : Uhhmm... Okay, Micheline.

Char : Can I just add one thing to that? I agree with what was just said. I also feel really strongly. I have worked with many patients with multiple myeloma, other blood cancers, and I really direct them to get clear information from their oncologist as to what they are not supposed to be doing. You know, I don't think that yoga teachers should be playing doctor when that _____.

Dr. Larry Payne : Amen, amen.

Char : So, yeah, I feel very strongly, really getting them to have that conversation with their oncologist or their physician, you know, what should I not be doing, what should I stay away from, and what can I do? So, that's my two cents.

Sharib Khan : Okay. I can hear Dr. Payne wanting to add something here. Go ahead. Yeah, please go ahead. (Laughter) Okay, that's good. We have more questions, but I think we will be totally out of time now, but I do want to obviously thank all of you for a wonderful discussion, but before we end, Dr. Payne, tell us how it was to meet Krishnamacharya like? (Laughter) I mean he is the father of modern yoga. Tell us a little bit like what was the energy, what was the conversation, some anecdotes. Something that will...

Dr. Larry Payne : The first time that I met him, I still was officially with the magazine. So, I had press calls and I was doing a book and all this and all of the other people from India went out of their way to accommodate me. He was not impressed. (Laughter) That was... He was just like... He was not impressed by anybody from the press or any _____. When he finally met me, he looked at me like, who are you, you know, and then later I came back and his son, this was after he broke his hip, so he was in bed because of the hip fracture for many years and he was totally different to me and his son asked me to do a tribute to him. So, I did the first tribute to Krishnamacharya in America and what I wanted to say is that for those of you on the staff _____ just send me an email, I would like to send you a copy, I have made _____ go back and found



this from 1987 and made this video and always people are there like _____ students and they are talking and Desikachar is crying, its really nice and I think there is nothing more than that that shows you the depth of this man and how his teaching changes and Desikachar was on the spot, you know, because he had to say well, yeah, he did teach like that then and now he teaches like this and it was always evolving, but it was truly an honor and he was so kind to me. In the end, he blessed me and he blessed this tribute in Los Angeles, California, and that was one of the greatest moments of my life, is to meet him and to do this for him. So, anyway, for all of you on the panel, if you send me an email, I am happy to send you one of his, its a big speech thing that we did and its not like watching Homeland, but it is pretty good. (Laughter).

Sharib Khan : Absolutely. It will be our pleasure to get a copy of the DVD on Krishnamacharya. I mean its... Its definitely a vintage collection.

Dr. Larry Payne : Its for all of you. You just send me the email, I'll have it sent.

Sharib Khan : Yeah. Sure. Yeah. Thanks so much.

Dr. Larry Payne : And what a great job you have done on that, as the panelist, you know, as the host. Thank you very much.

Sharib Khan : Its just a pleasure and a privilege to be able to have you all and talk to and actually learn from Marcela, who's my teacher, and have other panelists on the show and I saw a little humble effort to, you know, increase awareness about yoga and discuss important topics and also bring it from the perspective of experience and research and people who are doing this so that there is meaningful discussion from all the angles. Thank you all everyone and our next panel...

Dr. Larry Payne : With pleasure. Thank you very much.

Sharib Khan : Yes. And Marcela, Micheline, Dashama, and Char. We have the next panel. All listeners, November 7th with Dr. Carol Horton and we will be discussing yoga and another important topic. So, thank you all very much. I will send...

Thank you.

Sharib Khan : I will just send you all the recording for this conversation so you can put this on your website and blogs and other places. Thank you, once again. Namasthe!